

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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FM AMCONSUL PORT MORESBY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 505

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PDEV, PP

SUBJ: AUSTRALIAN EXODUS; PNG INFLUX

1. SEVERAL PAPUA NEW GUINEANS HAVE RECENTLY BEEN APPOINTED TO IMPORTANT POSITIONS TO REPLACE AUSTRALIANS, PRESUMABLY IN A MOVE TO REDUCE THE AUSTRALIAN PRESENCE PRIOR TO INDEPENDENCE. AMONG THE SENIOR APPOINTMENTS, IN EACH CASE REPLACING AN AUSTRALIAN ARE:

(A) COMMISSIONER OF POLICE PIUS KEREPIA, WHOSE DEPUTY WILL BE ANOTHER PAPUA NEW GUINEAN AND WHO IS NOW SEEKING THREE PNG ASSISTANT COMMISSIONERS. HIS AUSTRALIAN PREDECESSOR HAD BEEN HERE OVER 30 YEARS.

(B) VICE CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA, DR. GABRIEL GRIS.

(C) SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN RELATIONS AND TRADE, ANTHONY SIAGURU, REPLACING BILL CONROY WHO SPENT OVER 25 YEARS HERE. SIAGURU HAS BEEN ACTING SECRETARY FOR SEVERAL MONTHS.

2. IN ADDITION, A PAPUA NEW GUINEAN, JOSEPH AUIE, HAS BEEN NAMED ASSOCIATE SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LAW. HE IS EXPECTED TO REPLACE WILLIAM KEARNY, WHO HAS LABORED LONG AND LOYALLY IN THE PNG VINEYARDS, IN A MATTER OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MONTHS.

3. ONLY ONE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER IS NOW AUSTRALIAN,
ALL THE OTHER ARE PAPUA NEW GUINEANS.

4. THE NEWLY APPOINTED LAW REFORM COMMISSION IS ENTIRELY
PAPUA NEW GUINEAN, A POINT MADE TO ME QUITE PROUDLY BY
THE JUSTICE MINISTER.

5. COMMENT: THERE IS A GROWING SENSE OF PRIDE THAT
PAPUA NEW GUINEANS ARE MOVING INTO THE TOP JOBS, QUITE
APART FROM THE PERSONALITIES INVOLVED. WE ARE NOTING
A CHANGE IN THE ATMOSPHERE AS INDEPENDENCE COMES CLOSER.
PAPUA NEW GUINEANS SEEM TO BE SAYING "THIS IS OUR COUNTRY
NOW AND WE ARE RUNNING IT."

6. WE ANTICIPATE AN ACCELERATION IN THE DEPARTURE OF
AUSTRALIANS OVER THE REMAINDER OF THE YEAR FOR REASONS
WHICH WILL BE DISCUSSED IN A FORTHCOMING AIRGRAM.
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